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Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AF-08 PM-04
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 EB-08 NRC-05 FEAE-00 DODE-00 ERDA-05
TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 /117 W
----------251935Z 107368 /40
R 251811Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6841
INFO USMISSION IAEA VIENNA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 05343

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, TECH, EG, GW
SUBJECT: QATTARA DEPRESSION PROJECT: NUCLEAR
ASPECTS

1. SUMMARY: FRG HAS CONCLUDED THAT AT PRESENT TIME QATTARA DEPRESSION PROJECT DOES NOT APPEAR PROMISING AND THEREFORE DOES NOT WISH TO CONTINUE FEASIBILITY STUDY. HOWEVER, FRG OFFICIALS EXPECT PROJECT TO BE RAISED BY EGYPTIANS DURING SADAT VISIT TO BONN WEEK OF MARCH 28 AND ALSO DURING SUBSEQUENT SADAT VISIT TO WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY

2. US REPS FROM WASHINGTON AGENCIES (STATE, ACDA, ERDA, DOD) IN BONN FOR CONSULTATIONS ON ARMS CONTROL MATTERS RECEIVED BRIEFING ON PRESENT STATUS OF QATTARA DEPRESSION FEASIBILITY STUDY FROM OFFICIALS IN FOREIGN OFFICE AND MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION WHO ARE CONNECTED WITH PROJECT. FRG REPS REPORTED THAT FIRST STAGE OF PROJECT FEASIBILITY STUDY HAS RECENTLY BEEN COMPLETED. CONCLUSION IS THAT PROJECT COULD NOT BE COST-EFFECTIVE IF NON-NUCLEAR MEANS OF EXCAVA-
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TION WERE USED. QUESTION OF WHETHER PROJECT WOULD BE COST-EFFECTIVE IF NUCLEAR EXCAVATION WERE EMPLOYED IS STILL OPEN.

3. GERMANS CONSIDER POWER PRODUCTION ONLY SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT FROM PROJECT BUT NOTED THAT NET POWER OUTPUT (ESTIMATED AT 600MW) RELATIVELY SMALL COMPARED TO

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THAT FROM ALTERNATIVE TYPES OF POWER SOURCES. PRESENT ROUGH ESTIMATE IS THAT PROJECT COULD BE COST-EFFECTIVE ONLY IF PRICE OF OIL DOUBLED OVER NEXT DECADE AND FINANCING COULD BE OBTAINED AT LOW INTEREST RATE. ESTIMATED INVESTMENT COST OF PROJECT, USING NUCLEAR EXCAVATION, IS 3.2 BILLION DOLLARS.

4. GERMANS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT PROSPECTS FOR PROJECT DO NOT WARRANT EXPENDITURE OF 20 MILLION MARKS REQUIRED FOR SECOND STAGE OF FEASIBILITY STUDY. (SECOND STAGE WOULD INVOLVE EXTENSIVE TEST BORING TO DETERMINE BEST CONDITIONS FOR EVENTUAL TEST NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS ALONG CANAL ROUTE.) SENIOR FRG OFFICIAL PRESENT STATED THAT IT IS "ALMOST ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT FEASIBILITY STUDY WILL NOT BE CONTINUED." INSTEAD, GERMANS INTEND TO OFFER THE FUNDS TO EGYPTIANS FOR OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

5. EGYPTIANS APPARENTLY ALREADY AWARE OF GERMAN POSITION AND GERMANS EXPECT SADAT TO RAISE QUESTION OF CONTINUING FEASIBILITY STUDY DURING HIS VISIT TO BONN WEEK OF MARCH 28. PRESENT GERMAN ESTIMATE IS THAT IN VIEW OF HIGH LEVEL OF EGYPTIAN PUBLIC COMMIT-MENT TO PROJECT THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO DROP IDEA COMPLETELY DESPITE FRG'S CONCLUSION THAT PROJECT NOT WORTH PURSUING. TO MINIMIZE BLOW TO EGYPTIAN PRESTIGE

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NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 L-03
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TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 /117 W
----------251935Z 107012 /40

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 05343

GERMANS CONSIDERING TELLING SADAT THAT POSSIBILITY EXISTS FOR REVIEWING PROJECT IN ANOTHER TEN YEARS OR SO TO SEE IF TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS WILL HAVE CHANGED SITUATION.

6. FRG OFFICIAL NOTED POSSIBILITY THAT EVENTUALLY EGYPTIANS MIGHT TURN TO SOVIETS FOR HELP WITH PROJECT AND SUGGESTED THAT US WATCH SITUATION CLOSELY.

7. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, US REPS CONFIRMED THAT VIEWS ON QATTARA PROJECT CONVEYED TO FRG AND EGYPT LAST YEAR HAVE NOT CHANGED. IN PARTICULAR, BASED ON ITS STUDIES USG DOES NOT SEE HOW LARGE-SCALE NUCLEAR EXCAVATION PROJECTS CAN BE CONDUCTED WITHOUT VIOLATING LTBT.

8. GERMANS ALSO ASKED FOR PRESENT US VIEWS ON LARGER QUESTION OF USING NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES (NEPP). US REPS RECALLED PRESIDENTIAL INTEREST IN CESSATION OF NUCLEAR TESTING AND NOTED CONFIDENTIAL

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PROBLEMS POSED BY NEPP FOR EFFECTIVE TEST BAN. THEY ALSO STATED THAT US KNEW OF NO WAY TO PRECLUDE ACQUISITION OF WEAPONS RELATED BENEFITS IF PNES ARE EMPLOYED.

9. GERMANS CONSIDER IT LIKELY THAT REGARDLESS OF NEGATIVE FRG ATTITUDES, SADAT WILL RAISE QUESTION OF US ASSISTANCE WITH QATTARA PROJECT STUDY DURING COMING VISIT TO WASHINGTON. THEY WISHED TO MAKE CERTAIN THAT US WOULD BE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH QUESTION.
STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: STUDIES, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), NUCLEAR COOPERATION PROGRAMS, EXCAVATING EQUIPMENT, TEST FACILITIES
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3001358
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: QATTARA DEPRESSION PROJECT: NUCLEAR ASPECTS
TAGS: PARM, TECH, EG, GE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ee9261b2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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